67

I hear from Ka (Eagles Nest, ~~Trego~~ Zennor. St Ives) that they want a flat for 4 months after Christmas in the neighbourhood. So it might be worth your writing to her. But don't stay away 4 months whatever happens.

Hoping to see you

Your old friend

W.

If Roger or anyone asks you, please dont give my version which is strictly for you & Duncan only. The official version is simply that they quarrelled & have made it up.

52 Tavistock Square,
London,
W.C.1.
Telephone: Museum 2621

68a

Wed. Feb. 2nd 1927

Dearest, I've just got your letter, asking for news.

I expect you have heard by now from Clive that he isnt coming. Probably he has told you about it all.

I dont quite know what I had better say, as I am constantly being warned by them both not to say anything: but of course its all over London — so I will be indiscreet & give you my version — only dont please get me into trouble — It's only too likely I'm already embroiled.

Anyhow, the facts are (I'm in a hurry so dont expect great lucidity) that a week ago today Clive rang me up at lunch & said might he come in after dinner as he was desperate. He said he might tell me in some years why, but could say nothing now. We had Vita & W.J. Turner here, but Clive dined, & kept on hinting that he was breaking up his life, going out of England for some months, going to write a book in complete solitude, absolutely

without bearing, & so on: at which we had to laugh of
course, & finally he got into an aesthetic argument —
Everyone left. Next day he appeared in my studio
with his passport, on his way to get tickets, asking me
for your address. He would only say that he was going
to Cassis for 3 months then to Paris & then to
Charleston till October; however he asked if he might come to
tea, & went off again, babbling, half excited, half
bewildered as if he were ~~in~~ talking in his sleep.
Then I saw Vita, who had been at a party at Dotties
the night before, & Clive had behaved there in the
same way telling everyone — Sibyl, Ethel, Raymond &c —
that he was absolutely wretched & was going
away till the autumn. Everybody was talking, &
wondering if it was Mary or what. So he came
to tea, & plunged at once into a long account of
his misery, again seeming very excited, yet on the
whole rather happy, & high spirited. He said
that for three months things had been going wrong
between him & Mary, & suddenly, last Wednesday, at a
play in a box with several people, he had said

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to her "I am wretched" whereupon she told him that the truth was
she was slightly, but only slightly, in love with some one else.
Thereupon he practically went mad — at any rate he said he
had not slept for 3 nights, & had decided that life like this was
impossible, & he was going to break with her for ever.
He gave me a long account of their relationship; the upshot of
which was that though passionately in love, he could not
settle down with her, & also she made it impossible for
him to work. He thought if he left her for 9 months he
would forget about her entirely. He was sick he said
of the society they lived in, & found it more & more idiotic.
I should say that Mary had rung me up before he came to
implore me to soothe him, & to say that he grossly
exaggerated what had happened. But I could do nothing;
as whenever I suggested his waiting or going for a month only
he swore that he was in torture, & that his only hope
was to be with you & Duncan & work. Of course I
agreed about the horrors of inelegant Sibyls Christie & Leslie
& also thought that he must begin now if he meant to
do any long book. However, I didn't have to give advice,

68 b v

as he had told everybody & made all arrangements. So he
went off, & next day we went to the Webbs till Sunday night when
I came back to find a note marked urgent, telling me
that Mary had been to him in a perfect fury, especially
against me, (please dont tell this ever — he begged me
not to repeat it) She said it was a plot of mine against her,
& that I wanted to break their relationship. He warned me
in case she rang me up in a rage, as she well might. We
went to dine with him, that night, & he took me aside & said
rather sheepishly that after all he was putting off
going till March: Mary was suffering too much: & he
could not simply thrust her feelings aside — but still he meant
to go later, as he had said. That was all we could
say — except that Mary was furious with me, & he could
not pacify her. Nothing more was said (aint this like a
Defoe novel?) & we dined off cold pheasant & were
very impersonal & cheerful. Next day he rang me up
to say that Mary wanted to come & see me. She
came yesterday when Eddie also arrived, so that
we had a long & highly constrained conversation about
books — both of us looking at each other like tigresses,
for I of course was furious too & thought she had
behaved like a cook; as indeed I meant to tell her. At

NYPL

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last Eddie went, & after some palaver, she started off & asked me, ironically, if I had tried to pacify Clive as I had promised. I said that he was not pacifiable when I saw him: so then she wanted to know what he had said. Finally she gave me her version, which is that she is not in love with anyone, had never said so, had only been rather restless & so on, was devoted to him, was absolutely horrified when she realised how he took her words at the play, was then furious when she heard that he had told everybody at Dollie's party, was still more enraged when he said he was going for 9 months, & finally, when he rang up & said that I agreed he ought to go & called her "a little fool", her anger became such that she dashed off to see him, & abused me sky-high, - in short so stormed & raged at him that eventually he put the whole thing in her hands & said she was to decide for him what he should do. She of course told him to stay.

Then we went into the case, & she says that she detests the society they keep, longs for him to work, is often at her wits end to get out of parties, & finds him

68c v

a good deal deteriorated intellectually because of his debauchery. As for its being her influence, she would have none of it. She thought I accused her of being a silly mondaine, who only wanted flirting, & had better be broken with. This was explained away I think & we parted on friendly terms: but God knows what will come of it. She told me that he has plunged back at once into the old excesses – & was going out every night. But of course she said, if he goes away, as it would be best for him to do, the chances are he would leave me for ever.

So her only choice is I think to keep him here, & to try & control him. Whether she can, I don't know. I expect he will be relieved for a time at not having to work or go away & then the same thing will happen again. I've heard no more of them today: & I expect I shall be trounced by Clive next for saying things to Mary.

So don't for God's sake get me into further trouble. However, I can't think there's any harm in telling you: probably he has written already, & I daresay between us you'll get your own idea of the case. But I can't describe to you how odd he's been.

I don't think we shall go to America, as the expense seems too great. So you may see us – Love to Duncan.

Yr VB

2/10/08

Give Angelica my humble & obedient love. She's shingled herself, tell her: & her beauty is famous. I wish she would write to me

18th Feb 1927

52 Tavistock Sqre.

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Dearest,

I cant help thinking you sound a little dismal. I hope this is only my imagination. You would tell me, wouldnt you, if anything were worrying, or if I could do anything. Are you bothered about Duncan? I suppose the Grant ménage is an awful trial. I cant imagine anything I should like less. On the whole, I think you'd better marry Duncan; divorce Clive, & set up a house in a new name. But your prejudice against marriage is too great.

Your Clive news intrigues me greatly. On your word of honour, you must be indiscreet & inform me of the true situation when he arrives. All I gather from seeing them at supper at

72✓

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~~46~~ the other night is that they both seem rather depressed; but there is no outward change in their manner, & the company withdrew & left them alone as usual. I doubt that she will tell me any more, & I can't ask her here unless she suggests it. I expect you & I shall rank as her enemies in future. I can't help however — foolish as I may be — rather respecting her: she is unscrupulous, but ~~Sid~~ takes her fences, as they say. She don't mind what she does. I expect he will be much happier with you.

NYPL

Yes, I am shingled, or rather bingled. We got slightly merry the other night on Spanish wine, with Bobo & Clive; & she became very insinuating & seductive after dinner & implored me to let her try the effect. So I collapsed, egged on by Clive & Leonard, who seemed both to think that my own style of hair doing couldn't be worsened. I can't describe the delight when the long coil of cold hair fell off, & my neck was exposed. I think however hideous it makes me look it is worth it. Besides, the front remains the

same; its only that one has a partridges rump behind. It was none of Vita's doing, I can assure you. She made me swear not to, & says it will utterly ruin my appearance. All the same, though it loses me ~~your~~ the love of sister, lover, & niece, I dont regret it. For you, of course, beautiful as you are, its a different matter. These masterpieces should be left untouched. But then I was always a second rate work, & am now much the worse for wear, so it dont matter. Its the not having hairpins, & the giving it a brush & a wollop in the morning thats such a delight. Also travelling — think of the mercy ~~&~~ of it in trains & steamers. Perhaps you'll come to it — shocking though the thought is.

All the London hostesses are engaged in a curious skirmish about Desmond. He is said to be on the verge of a break down; Sibyl wants to set up a fund to give him a holiday: Christabel & I to pay his debts. Happily I have now receded, after setting them by the ears, & only hear from Christabel how unreasonable Sibyl is, & from Sibyl how much she fears that Christabel is. I rather expect that the MacCarthys will be set up for life, & keep a motor in the end;

We are much tempted by Cory to buy a second hand Morris or Citroen: the cost is under £200 probably; & he says one could need not pay insurance or tax if left at Rodmell, where the shed will be quite enough. It remains then to make £200 by the Lighthouse. At the moment it seems to me inconceivably bad— in which case, it will be a success I daresay, like Bunny's book, about which Lytton, Raymond & I agree—its unspeakably bad. Lytton was up last week, as Carrington has been thrown from a horse & had they thought fractured her pelvis. It turns out to be bruises only, so they have gone back. He has thrown over Philip, I gather, & is on with Roger Senhouse whom he wants us to be nice to. He is almost imbecile I'm told; but rather attractive perhaps. NYPL Also I'm in the thick of another love affair— that tipsy rooks, J.W. Turner. He came to tea & confided: dont spread it beyond W's area: his wife Delphine is secretary at Claridges Gallery, so you may know her. He wants to have her for friend, & Cynthia Noble, Mrs Saxton Noble's beautiful & wealthy daughter for mistress. Will I see her & persuade her to take "an imaginative view of life"? That is what he wants. But I dont suppose she'll consent— she wants a large family & a house in Bayswater. It is a sad sign of middle age being confided in.

Oh we've got to dine with the Hendersons now. Tell me all you can.

VW

HAMILL 2/10/66

(Feb 1927)

70 a

52 T.S.

Wednesday

Well well — in came Clive yesterday & said, casually, he was going to Cassis in a week or so. When I said I was surprised, he poohpoohed it, & said he had always meant to. "But I thought Mary told me you'd given up the idea?" I said. "Mary was probably mistaken about that as about other things" he said. "Of course I didnt want to go off — leave her in a pucker; but its all settled now." "Is she very much upset?" I asked. He merely laughed, & turned the

conversation to Desmond (who's ill in
Switzerland) as if it were a matter of
perfect indifference to him, &
Mary an acquaintance only.
So perhaps he has broken off finally.
He's made out that he had always
meant this. I suppose, after the violent
scene a week ago, he cooled again,
or there was another quarrel.
But perhaps you know more.
He's dining here tonight, but I shan't
hear anything; also the subject now
seems to bore him.

We've finally refused the American
offer, anyhow for this Spring, as
they didn't mean to pay hotel bills
apparently. They've cabled to ask us
to come later, but that won't be yet
anyhow. So I think I, at least,
shall manage Cassis, whether

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we go on to Greece or not. It would
be about the end of March I suppose.
Now that Clive's going, perhaps
we could share the villa with
him. It sounds enchanting. London
is vile beyond words. I am
involved with Clarice & Sibyl's
over a subscription for Desmond,
Vita is in Persia, I'm getting
rather nervous about my novel —
altogether I greatly envy you.
Do keep an eye on a French
chair, a table, a chest of drawers
for me in your wanderings.
I'm very happy that Duncan is
better. I can't help loving him in
spite of all.
Great hurry —
Yr VB

1927

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Wednesday

We thought you knew what to do - the same as Mrs Dalloway, I suppose. You have to put Harcourts ~~Horror~~ name & the price — both the same. - But perhaps you cd. alter the jacket I sent. I sent their address at once.

383 Madison Avenue New York.

Will you deal with them direct?

~~That is it.~~

A thousand thanks to Duncan for his enchanting effusion. Eddy & I get together & mouth his phrases. As for the chorus of praise wh. is sung in your & D's honour — I cant abear it. Never could.

Will write in a day or two.

Hope to see Q. on Saturday. VW.